

Claim Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.121

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 5, canceled claim 4, and added claim 6, in which added texts are underlined and deleted texts are stricken through.

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A reinforcing bar coupler, comprising:

a cover unit having a circular hole therein and comprising two or more pieces to cover a circumference of a reinforcing bar, with outer surfaces of the pieces being inclined in the same direction to form a tapered surface, and an plurality of annular grooves being provided on an inner surface of each of the pieces so that an annular rib of the reinforcing bar is seated in one of the plurality of annular grooves; and

two or more locking bushings, each having a shape of a pipe or a ring, each the pipe having on an inner surface thereof a tapered surface to correspondingly to the tapered surface of the cover unit, the locking bushing compressing the cover unit inwards

wherein two out of the two or more locking bushings are disposed substantially around and lock two ends of the cover unit, wherein remaining locking bushings are disposed substantially evenly between the two locking bushings at both ends of the cover unit, and wherein the two or more locking bushings are configured to be driven along a longitudinal direction.

Claim 2. (Original) The reinforcing bar coupler according to claim 1, wherein the cover unit comprises a pair of pieces each having a semi-circular cross-section, with outer surfaces of the pieces being inclined in the same direction to form a tapered surface, and the locking bushing has a shape of a pipe having a circular cross-section, with an inner surface of the pipe being formed to be in close contact with the tapered surface of the cover unit.

Claim 3. (Original) The reinforcing bar coupler according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the cover unit comprises: a lateral groove provided on an inner surface of the cover unit in a lengthwise direction thereof so that a lateral rib is seated in the lateral groove.

Claim 4. (Canceled)

Claim 5. (Currently amended) A bar coupling method using reinforcing bar coupler according to claim 1, comprising:

placing ends of reinforcing bars so that the ends of the reinforcing bars are butted on each other;

placing the two or more pieces each having a tapered surface to surround the ends of the reinforcing bars; and

fitting the two or more locking bushings in one longitudinal direction through a drive fitting method so that the tapered surfaces provided on the inner surfaces of the locking bushings come into close contact with the tapered surfaces of the pieces.

Claim 6. (New) The method according to claim 5, wherein the one longitudinal direction is a direction from a smaller-diameter part to a larger-diameter part of the cover unit.